

# Spotlight Initiative

To eliminate violence against women and girls



**Galvanising a movement, responding to all forms of violence against women and girls.**

 **Impact Stories**

**Zimbabwe, Southern Africa**  
2019-2023

Funded by the European Union and the United Nations





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**UN Women IMPACT STORIES**

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# Brief

## background



The Spotlight Initiative is a global multi-year partnership initiated by the European Union and the United Nations, in partnership with Governments, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030.

Launched in Zimbabwe in 2019, the implementation of the programme is led by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, in partnership with six UN agencies – namely ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN WOMEN, the European Union Delegation and civil society organizations.

With a funding commitment of USD30 million from the EU, the Spotlight Initiative in Zimbabwe was being implemented in five provinces across Zimbabwe - Mashonaland Central, Harare, Manicaland, Mashonaland West, and Matabeleland South under the following six pillars: Legislative and Policy Framework; Strengthening Institutions; Prevention and Social Norms; Delivery of Quality Services; Data Availability and Capacities, and Women's Movement and Civil Society.

Local stakeholders implementing the Initiative working with UN Women included the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Gender Commission, Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit, Community Based Organisations and Civil Society Organisations in an effort to ensure all women and girls benefit from adequate legislation and policies, gender responsive institutions, violence prevention programmes, essential services, comparable and reliable data, and strong women's movements and civil society organisations.

In Zimbabwe Spotlight Initiative represents an unprecedented global effort to invest in gender equality as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at country level, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls.

# Overview

## of impact

**PREVENTION:** Women now active participants, at the forefront in functional community structures that work to address GBV in the local community. The common silence that enveloped issues of GBV, HPs and VAWG has been replaced by voices of women from community structures speaking out against GBV and VAWG. Women and girls now actively participate in advocacy towards promoting equitable gender norms and speaking out against gender-based violence and harmful practices in the community.

- **Strengthened referral pathways:** In Communities Spotlight Initiative strengthened referral pathway system for victims of GBV, this is seen through the influx of clients seeking assistance on SGBV related issues such as Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment and Child Abuse.
- **Behaviour Change:** In Spotlight Provinces behaviour change has been noted in the way GBV, child marriages and SGBV cases of abuse are being handled. Increasingly perpetrators of violence are not going unreported, more people now report and speak out against gender-based violence in all its forms.
- **Violence Free Spaces:** Public Engagement Campaigns and Successful setup of Safe Markets and mobile one-stop centers in response to GBV, VAWG and HP in In Harare, Mash Central and Matabeleland Provinces has strengthened collaboration and coordination of various stakeholders such as Health care providers, Gender champions, Chiefs, Village Heads, and Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) in tackling emerging issues.

**MOVEMENT BUILDING:** Significant progress has been made in igniting grassroots movements focused on promoting Gender Equality and women's empowerment at community, district, and provincial level. UN Women's Implementing partners across five provinces created networks of stakeholders, community-based groups, health and law enforcement officials, government officials and other service providers, who are conducting and responding to joint advocacy initiatives in local communities primarily focused on Ending Violence Against Women and girls.

Innovators Against GBV leadership development programme has been able to harness the talent, energy and creativity of graduate volunteers and inspired innovative volunteerism and solutions that resulted in safer communities for women and girls while building a critical mass of skilled young experts on gender across five provinces.

**INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING:** Supporting Government departments and Civil Society to ensure international recommendations and commitments in normative frameworks (such as CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform, SADC Gender Protocol, Maputo Protocol) are domesticated, implemented, and monitored.

UN Women provided technical support to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development in the production of the CEDAW Mid-Term report and the rolling out of the recommendations for the CEDAW National Action Plan across Zimbabwe's 10 Provinces.

The Gender Bench Book has been developed and finalised, National CEDAW Reports are up to date, Gender Commission M&E Framework was developed and finalised and National Action Plan on The Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women have been successfully developed following wide consultations.


**LAWS AND POLICY:** UN Women supported the development of the Gender Bench Book, aimed at providing an accessible, user-friendly reference guide for judicial officers in protecting the rights of women and girls. This includes strengthening the gender-responsiveness of judgements on cases and ensuring that women and girls are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Placing a spotlight on judicial service commission to end violence against women, Judicial service commission officials were trained on Gender justice which also marked the beginning of collaborative efforts between UN Women and the Harare Magistrates Court in displaying knowledge and visibility products on rape and gender-based crimes through the Court's broadcasts.

The Judicial Service Commission (JSC), the Rotten Row Magistrates Court beyond branding the Court walls was also illuminated in orange – a colour which symbolizes hope and a brighter future, free of violence. It also served as a means of demonstrating solidarity in eliminating all forms of violence and it was therefore used as the colour of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.



# Reach In Numbers



Over **2 Million** people with **52%** being women reached through mainstream media and Digital media engagement on Gender Based Violence prevention messaging

**50 000** people reached directly with **75%** being women in the five provinces through Increased advocacy actions by gender champions and implementing partners at community level



Over **30 000** people with **70%** being women reached directly through grassroots movement building initiatives such as Peace huts, Cath them young, Men's forums and community and local stakeholder engagement by Innovators Against Gender Based Violence



**500** community gender champions and SASA activists with **85%** being women trained on GBV advocacy across the five provinces



**100** women's rights organizations at local and national level with a reach of **over 1 million** people had their technical capacities on GBV Advocacy strengthened through annual national symposiums and quarterly meetings



**350** Judicial service commission officials trained on gender justice



**150** women traders benefited from gender responsive safe markets



**100** traditional, community and religious leaders with reach of over **2 million** people engaged and trained to advance GBV Advocacy



**15** Government Departments, Independent Commissions and local authorities trained on gender and macroeconomics and Gender Responsive Budgeting and Advocacy



**5** feminist knowledge hubs in four provinces established





# Peace Hut Initiative

## transforms community from rooted cultural norms of violence

“Our aim is to stop gender-based violence in the household and community. We confront the oppressive cultural and religious norms that subject women to domestic violence, gender-based violence and exploitation. We seek to transform these negative social norms and practices,” said Robert Kumbula, a 50-year-old Spotlight Initiative gender champion. He is also the Village Head and Chairperson of a Peace Hut in Rugare Village, Chinyamukwakwa in Manicaland province.

Kumbula and nine other members are in the Spotlight Initiative programme that capacitates and teaches them how to fight gender-based violence in their community. “We observed a lot of violence between couples that stemmed from the local cultural norms where women are viewed as inferior to men and forced to be obedient and submissive to their husbands,” Kumbula reported.

The situation is unsafe for women and young girls in Chinyamukwakwa. Parents arranged early marriages for their daughters to reduce their financial burdens. Many girls dropped out of school because of pregnancy or early premature marriage. The community could not support gender equality and the rights of the girl child due to rigid cultural and religious beliefs and economic challenges.



By challenging the social and cultural norms that expose women and girls to GBV, the Spotlight Initiative Peace Hut model mitigated GBV in our community.

*Robert Kumbula - Village Head and Peace Hut Chairperson of Rugare Village*



The establishment of peace huts under the EU funded Spotlight Initiative, which UN Women and Women Action Group are carrying out in Manicaland, enabled the Gender champions who received training and mobilisation to raise awareness, persuade and bring about behaviour change in the community. The community, guided by their leaders, began to accept, and support gender equality and the safeguarding of the girl child as they learned to value them.

“When my daughter was 15, she ran away with a man to live with him. We found her and brought her back home with the help of the Peace Hut programme. Now she is back in school. Our culture in this community put children at risk, girls would be given away in marriage when they were too young, often as a form of transaction. The Spotlight Initiative taught us about gender equality and gender-based violence and our children are safe and back in school. I am happy,” said Varaidzo Chigwenyati, 50, from Mbasani Village.

“Women were treated like animals, men had all the power over the money, but the peace hut conversations changed that. Gender-based violence has reduced, men are more respectful and less dominant, and women know where to go if they face violence,” she continued.

Some of the girls who escaped from child marriages and returned to school have done well in their studies and are now contributing to their community. Some of them are inspiring others, urging students and the community to protect the girl child.

“As schools, we value the Peace Hut programme. We are responsible for the children. Our duty is to make sure every learner attends school. For them to be in school and to succeed in their studies, they need a peaceful and stable home environment. We are glad our community embraced this programme. Our teachers also strive to protect the rights of the children,” said Mutetwa C, the Head of Nyamukwakwa secondary school.

The community hopes that people will continue to live in this new peace and harmony, free from Gender based violence and child marriages, where the girl child can finish her education and achieve her full potential. Their next aim is to build a more sustainable and permanent structure for the peace hut meetings.



# Catch Them Young Initiative

## helps keep children in school



“As a GBV champion and a teacher at Muzika school, I learned about the different types of violence that people face because of their sex or gender. I realized that we needed to teach our children about GBV from an early age, so that they can grow up with a sense of respect and equality. By doing this, we can make significant progress towards ending gender-based violence in our society. We also use our children as agents of change, who can spread the message of GBV prevention and response to their families and communities,” Francesca Chakoma said.

Some teachers at Muzika Primary School in Guruve district, Mashonaland Central, received training on Gender Based Violence through the Spotlight Initiative programme and are extending their knowledge to young boys and girls in their school through the 'Catch Them Young Initiative'. This initiative aims to teach primary school children on how to prevent and challenge gender-based violence (GBV), raise awareness and promote gender equality, in schools and rural areas.

The Spotlight Initiative programme, funded by the EU, implemented by UN Women through Lower Guruve Development Association (LGDA) focused on ending violence against women and girls in Guruve, Mashonaland Central province. The programme exposed boys and girls to gender dynamics from an early age through poems, dramas, and other visual arts at school, in communities and other public events raising awareness against GBV. This helped the children understand and value gender equality and the rights and empowerment of the girl child.

Many young girls in the community have dropped out of school because their parents forced them to marry early, while many schoolboys have also left school due to drug and alcohol addiction. However, this initiative is making sure that the community puts the



By raising awareness on violence against women and girls, through the Spotlight Initiative, we are building a generation that respects equality and dignity.

*Fransica Chakoma - Teacher at Muzika Primary School*

children's welfare first and works together to keep them in school and educate them about gender-based violence and abuse.

"Our goal is to create a generation that is aware of the harm of violence against women and girls. We want every child to value the importance of a peaceful society and the potential of women to improve communities for the better," Francesca said.

Bernard Chidhakwa, a councillor of Ward 18 in Hurungwe district, Mashonaland West, is also carrying out a similar initiative under the Spotlight Initiative programme. He said that teaching young children about GBV issues is speeding up the efforts to eradicate GBV in his community.

Chidhakwa highlighted that they wanted to include early intervention for children in the school curriculum, as it had proven to be very effective. He said that everyone should join the fight against GBV, which was a critical issue that needed to be dealt with. He emphasised the importance of educating children from a young age as the future generation and some of them might not be aware of the harm caused by violence. He added that raising awareness on the issue should be prioritised.

The girls have learned about their rights and how to protect themselves from child marriages. They know how to seek help and resist pressure if they are forced to quit school and get married. The boys are engaged in sports and drama, which keep them away from drugs and help them concentrate on their studies and community development. The Gender champions are optimistic about expanding the Catch them Young Initiative to more schools and communities across all districts.



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# Safe markets

for women established, facilitate empowerment, safety and security in public spaces



For 15 years, Gracious Mugariwa, a 34-year-old mother and vendor at Overspill shopping centre in Epworth in the capital, Harare, had been dreaming of a safe and harassment-free work environment. She thought safety and secure working environments were for people working in offices and in the formal sector only. When a vegetable market was built for her and many other women in Epworth and Umzingwane markets, their lives changed for the better and Mufarirwa's dreams were fulfilled.

“In the plastic sheds by the roadside where we used to sell from, it was dangerous and unprofitable. I faced sexual harassment from drunkards and was vulnerable to life threatening accidents from drunkards,” said Mugariwa.

Selling in plastic sheds with very limited access to water and ablution facilities affected their profits and income. The markets had little hygiene and safety, which made customers lose interest. This also posed a danger to their health and well being especially during outbreaks of contagious diseases such as Typhoid, Cholera and COVID-19.

To address the issues of Gender Based Violence, Water Sanitation and Hygiene and women's insecurities and lack of safety, the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative programme, implemented by UN Women through Katswe Sisterhood, Epworth and Umzingwane local boards constructed safe markets to empower women working in the informal sector and ensure security and safety for them while they operate.

These gender responsive markets are changing the lives and work of women vendors at these two markets. The safe market in Epworth has 96 well-lit and secure stalls, a resting and playing area for children, separate ablution facilities for women and men, and clean water facilities. Umzingwane market has a flea market area with 40 vendors and 7 kitchens, a veranda for eating, fencing, a storeroom, a renovated toilet, and a separate playing area for children.

Gracious expressed her appreciation of the safe market: "We were engaged and involved from the start; we could not believe it at first, but it has become a reality. Today, we are happy to share with you how our business and work environment have improved. We feel secure and respected and have dignity as women in business and the community."

Winnie Ncube, a 38-year-old vendor from Habane Extension in Esigodini in Umzingwane district, also expressed gratitude. "I'm so excited, I can't wait for the official opening and to start working in the new market. It feels like a child wearing a new dress on a Christmas morning when I see our market being completed. We never expected this to happen. The structure will help us change the way we work, with storerooms that will protect our products and make our work easier. We don't have to carry products back home every day anymore. We also received training on business management to enhance our selling and marketing skills and improve our businesses," she said.

In addition to the gender responsive safe markets, women vendors also received training on business management. Since the trainings, Gracious has been able to save some money from the profits and has opened a tuckshop. "I am now progressing and becoming more successful. I'm now able to invest in other activities to earn more income," Grace said.

“

Spotlight Initiative has given us dignity as female vendors.

*Gracious Mugariwa - Epworth safe market beneficiary*





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## Community groups fight negative cultural norms to champion equality and women's rights

At Mawabeni in Ward 5 of Umzingwane district in Matabeleland South Province, Spotlight Initiative programme has capacitated several gender champions with social accountability skills to engage various stakeholders including duty bearers, teachers, nurses and counsellors and police on how to work together to fight and respond to gender-based violence, fight social norms that harm women and girls and promote gender equality in the district.

“We capacitated the community with social accountability skills and how to work with duty bearers, teachers, clinic staff, and police to combat GBV and protect women from abuse. After facing many difficulties, we have established a good relationship with the institutions and stakeholders in the community, such as the Victim Friendly Unit of the police. We have also set up a One Stop Centre that provides various services for gender-based violence survivors,” said Dube, a 30-year-old coordinator of a 12-member group of Gender Champions.

“The community benefited from the programme, which was inclusive of everyone. As champions, we trained people with diverse abilities on how to address gender-based violence and social accountability. We have become a group of influential people in the community, and our male engagement has been very effective. We now have HeForShe champions among us and they will educate other men on gender-based violence issues. Here in our area, women used to face violence from gold panners, but that is gradually changing,” highlighted Rebecca, one of the beneficiaries of the Spotlight Initiative trainings.

Sihlangu Donga, a 36-year-old gender-based violence survivor and beneficiary of the Spotlight Initiative programme acknowledged the programme’s efforts in capacitating community members with information, options, and procedures to follow when they experience gender-based violence. She said that this has also enabled those who were trained to go further and train others.

As Gender Champions, they work in groups to empower women with knowledge on their rights, options they have when they face violence, referral pathways to use for support when reporting gender-based violence cases and the reporting procedures. We have conducted community awareness and trainings to make women more familiar with the support system in their area.

“We have lawyers in our communities who can help women and girls, but before this some of them did not know where to report abuse. That is no longer the case,” said Sihlangu.

In Matabeleland South Province, gender-based violence prevalence is high due poverty and oftentimes drought. UN Women through the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative programme is working with various stakeholders such as Civil Society Organisations, the government, traditional and religious leaders to address root causes and effects of gender-based violence in the province. Some of the initiatives of the programme include the capacitation of gender champions who are championing gender equality in the communities, promoting women’s economic empowerment, increasing GBV awareness and referral pathways for women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative’s overall objective is to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.



“  
The Spotlight Initiative has transformed our community through inclusivity and leaving no one behind.  
Rebecca Dube -  
Mawabeni HeForShe  
Coordinator



Ernet Sibanda

## Movement building on GBV transformational to families and community

“My husband and I used to fight over small things. For us, money was the main key driver of domestic violence. This was not happening in our household only, this whole community was restless, mainly because of poverty. People would fight for free food items that came from various donors and I was usually at the centre of these fights”, said Irene Chifundo, a 40-year-old gender champion who transformed through trainings facilitated by Lower Guruve Development Association supported by UN Women through the European Union-funded Spotlight Initiative programme.

Chifunda and her husband Felix Majaya are both unemployed and have four children. Their family solely relied on Majaya’s income from various part - time jobs that he carried around their village. Things worsened when Majaya got injured and could not earn as much as he used to and failed to provide adequately for his family. This worsened their situation at home and fuelled Gender Based Violence (GBV) in their household.

Chifunda and Majaya are among many gender champions who were trained on Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Gender Based Violence at Mandaza village, Mbire district in Mashonaland Central province. These gender champions got an in-depth understanding and appreciation of the advantages of Equalities from household to national levels, the essence of empowering women in all spheres and levels especially economically, as a key step towards eliminations of Gender Based domestic Violence. Moreover, the champions were trained on Gender Based Violence, its repercussions in the households and in the community, and explored possible ways to mitigate GBV cases in their community.



After receiving trainings on Women's Empowerment, Chifunda and other women in her village also received start-ups for various income generation projects in an effort to make them self-reliant and help contribute to their families' upkeep. This was a big step towards elimination of GBV and domestic violence. Currently, Chifunda is growing vegetables for sale. Her vegetable growing project has more than doubled their household income.

"I appreciate the education and trainings that I received from the Spotlight Initiative Programme. My family is now living peacefully. Through the Women's Economic Empowerment trainings and start-ups, we received, I have started a vegetable growing project and it is doing well. I am now in a more empowered position to better support my family. This has eliminated opportunities for the occurrence of violence here at our home." shared Chifunda.

According to a 2022 study by International Youth Development Foundation, Mashonaland Central province is one of the provinces in Zimbabwe with highest Intimate Partner Violence with nine in every 10 women having experienced a form of GBV. Since the interventions by UN Women and Lower Guruve Development Association through EU-funded Spotlight Initiative programme, GBV cases significantly dropped in Mbire and surrounding areas. Referral pathways by trained gender champions have also helped in increasing survivors' access to services.

## ▶ MOVEMENT BUILDING, IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GBV

Significant progress has been made in igniting grassroots movements focused on promoting Gender Equality and women's empowerment at community, district, and provincial level. Through the support from the Spotlight Initiative funded by the European Union, UN Women's Implementing partners across five provinces created networks of stakeholders, community-based groups, health and law enforcement officials, government officials and other service providers, who are conducting and responding to joint advocacy initiatives in local communities primarily focused on Ending Violence Against Women and girls. "There has been tremendous change and improvement since the inception of the Spotlight initiative, the way cases of GBV, child marriages and other cases of abuse against women are being handled by law enforcement officers and health care providers has changed.

More people are now reporting and speaking up against gender-based violence as evidenced by statistics shared by Community Based Organisations and groups" Stated a Report by Women Action Group an implementing partner based in Manicaland Province.

At the national level, national network of women's rights organisations and activists, Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe coordinated over 46 women's rights groups to develop advocacy messaging targeted at duty bearers calling for specific actions on women's rights. In a statement the women's Coalition stated to Government "We thus emphasize that a good quality justice system requires that all components of the system adhere to international standards of competence, impartiality, gender-responsiveness and provide, in a timely fashion, appropriate and effective remedies for women to preserve their lives". UN Women provides continuous support to women's rights organisations to ensure sustained advocacy initiatives on behalf of women and girls.

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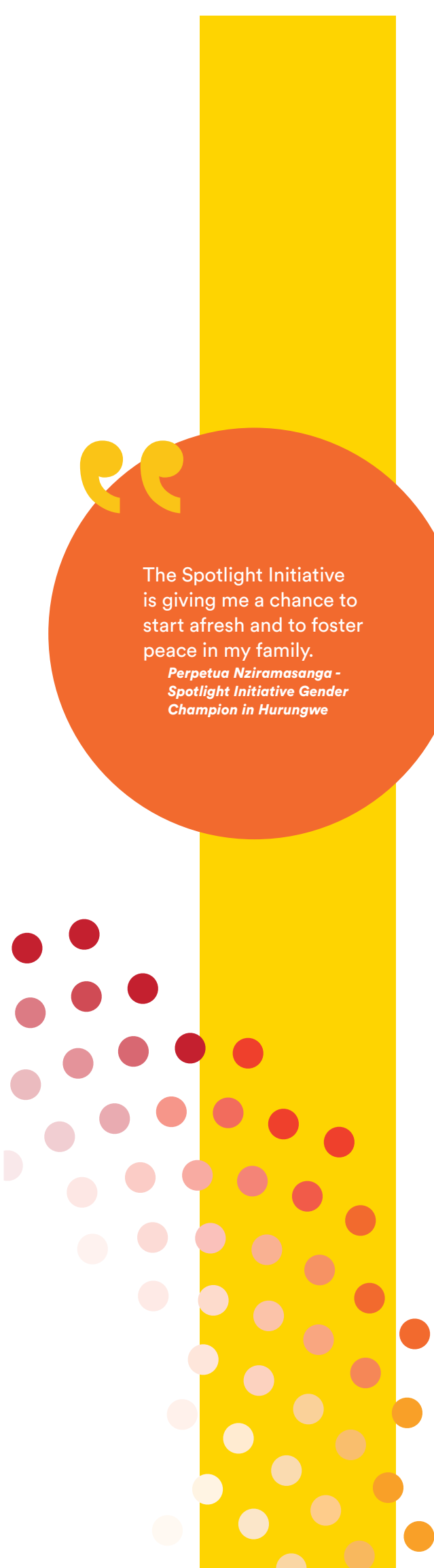
# Optimistic

## about family's future after transformational encounter



In Hurungwe district, Mashonaland West province, UN Women rolled out the European Union funded Spotlight Initiative through Caritas, a community-based organisation. Selected women and men were trained on Gender Based Violence, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment who later became gender champions and ambassadors. The Spotlight Initiative programme provided the trained gender champions with bicycles for them to reach out to victims in remote and hard to get areas to run a campaign that speaks out on gender-based violence, providing counselling and referral pathways to survivors and educating others on Gender Equality and GBV.

Perpetua Nziramasanga is one of the beneficiaries of the Spotlight Initiative GBV campaign in Hurungwe district. She believes the Spotlight Initiative programme transformed her way of life and brought her family closer together after awful experiences of domestic violence.



The Spotlight Initiative is giving me a chance to start afresh and to foster peace in my family.

*Perpetua Nziramasanga -  
Spotlight Initiative Gender  
Champion in Hurungwe*

Nziramasanga explained how her past experiences unfolded. She highlighted that Intimate Partner Violence was the main cause for all her past household challenges. She survived all the previous bad experiences and had resorted to aggression as the only way to survive in a relationship. She went on to applaud Spotlight Initiative programme for helping her to turn a new leaf that has helped in building peace in her family and new relationships.

“I survived three toxic relationships. Violence was the only language in my past experiences. Slowly, I became very aggressive, especially in my current relationship and I was counting the days to when this one will end too. After the Spotlight Initiative trainings on the effects of GBV in a family setup, community and how to avoid confrontations, we have turned a new leaf, and we are living peacefully as a household. I have become a gender ambassador and can now teach my children and educate others on the dangers of GBV,” said Perpetua.

Making use of her past experiences and teaching she received, Perpetua has set new sites on keeping the peace and love in her family. Currently enjoying her transformation, she now enjoys family and community life different as a productive and valuable member.

For years Gender Based Violence has been widespread in Hurungwe. Oftentimes, GBV survivors did not get the justice they deserved due to lack of legal services and access to health services as well. To address these problems, Spotlight Initiative trained gender champions who are raising awareness on GBV in the district.

The champions have also been trained on providing referral pathways to survivors and linking them with legal, health and psycho-social service providers. Survivors also received various skills training that will help them to cope and be self-reliant. Moreover, UN Women in Zimbabwe through the European Union funded Spotlight Initiative programme has been working at strengthening the capacity of Caritas and service providers to collaborate and deliver effective and survivor centred GBV prevention and response services in line with global standards and best practices.



## Using Edutainment in transforming negative social norms

“We began as a drama group and expanded our work from entertainment into education and development programs”. Founder of the youth led initiative narrates their journey. The Youth Edutainment Services Trust (YES Trust Zimbabwe) is a youth led Civic Society Organization established by a group of young people based in Plumtree from both Bulilima and Mangwe Districts.

Formed in 2008 and formerly registered in 2013 as a trust the organisation joined the spotlight initiative in 2019 with the vision of promoting youth increased access to information particularly on women’s rights and gender-based violence. “we are driven by the axiom that information is power and that informed young women and men are bound to make informed decisions that assist them to effectively engage in life processes that determine their destiny” said director at Yes Trust Zimbabwe Bright P Samavoe.

Through the EU funded Spotlight programme, in Bulilima district the organization conducted advocacy campaigns through implementing a strong youth led folk culture methodology, which employed Edutainment and Multimedia campaign to engage local community, households and decision makers in local discourse on issues affecting women, and girls, raise awareness of pertinent gender equality and Social protection of women and girls against Gender Based Violence and enhancing community participation in women empowerment initiatives.



Ernet Sibanda

“Our strategy before engaging the community is to start with edutainment before discussing issues, which is education wrapped up in entertainment. We have experienced people opening up after seeing our plays, the dramas evoke emotions of people who had been abused and

unpacks GBV in a vivid way. We can tell people's individual reactions to our plays some people react instantly and open up to receive help”. Said Bright

The Plumtree based five member Edutainment group focuses on activities such as ; drama for development, Youth Arts festivals, Sport tournaments, awareness roadshows, music, community dialogues, storytelling and short awareness films. These interventions have transformed the way the community view and treat women. Their efforts has highlighted the negatives and evils associated with Gender based violence and has gained support and afforded more space by local leadership to carry on the work.

“We believe people are impacted more by visualizing than just hearing. In rural communities, we have seen drama being effective, people's concentration is usually high during Plays. Going Forward we hope to be full time national and international actors, we want to continue changing people’s lives through our work. Currently our plays are live and also shared online however we hope to be also on national Television, with more funding we hope to have our own recording studio”. Said Bright Samavoe



Ernet Sibanda



Photo caption: Co-Chairs of the #HeForShe Campaign Group of Diplomats in Zimbabwe: the UN Women Zimbabwe Country Representative- Ms. Fatou Lo and the EU Ambassador Jobst von Kirchmann at the #HeForShe dialogue in Harare, Zimbabwe

## #HeForShe Campaign Group placing gender equality at the heart of development cooperation

The #HeForShe Campaign Group was launched in 2018 by UN Women in Zimbabwe as part of the #HeForShe Movement. It is a network of diplomats who come together to share experiences and ideas on gender equality and male engagement, promote peer-to-peer accountability and jointly advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment while fulfilling their commitments at a professional and personal level. Currently, the campaign group has 15 Heads of Missions and six Heads of UN Agencies who rotate as chairs co-chairing with UN Women.

In the last year of implementation of the Spotlight Initiative as has been done in previous years, Members of the #HeForShe Campaign Group of Diplomats in Zimbabwe officially welcomed the European Union Ambassador Jobst von Kirchmann as the incoming Co-Chairperson of the group on the 7th of December 2022 in Harare as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The event, co-hosted by UN Women Zimbabwe and the European Union Delegation with support from the Spotlight Zimbabwe technical Team, created an opportunity for delegates to discuss Sexual Harassment and Exploitation in the workplace.

A total of 90 delegates participated in the event, including Heads of Missions, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Heads of UN Agencies, business leaders, Civil Society Organisations, the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, artists, Youth Innovators Against Gender-Based Violence, and members of the media.

The UN Women Zimbabwe Country Representative, Ms. Fatou Lo, and the EU Ambassador, Jobst von Kirchmann, took time to appreciate the leadership and contributions of the British Embassy as the Outgoing Co-Chairing Mission for the #HeForShe Campaign Group. Among other achievements, the British Embassy advocated for the participation of business leaders in the #HeForShe Movement, working closely with the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) and UN Women.

The British Embassy also inspired the campaign group of diplomats to jointly advocate for eliminating sexual harassment and exploitation in the workplace. At the event, the EU ambassador revealed that they have placed gender equality at the centre of development cooperation, which is aptly reflected in the Multi-annual Indicative Programme for Zimbabwe 2021-2027. In addition, the EU has set itself an ambitious target of ensuring that at least 85% of all its new programmes will have gender equality and women and girls' empowerment as a principal or a significant objective.

Working collectively as 'Team Europe,' the EU and its Member States, together with Switzerland, are making over €200M available for 2021-2027 towards gender equality and women's empowerment in Zimbabwe.

In addition, the EU fully financed the Spotlight Initiative, a joint EU-UN partnership, to eliminate violence against women and girls to the tune of USD30 million from 2019-2023. The EU will also continue to build on the gains of the Spotlight Initiative by supporting the Government of Zimbabwe and other stakeholders to implement the High-Level Political Compact, signed at the highest level of the State, for enhanced GBV prevention and response.





Photo Caption: His Excellency President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa launching the High-Level Political Compact on ending Gender Based Violence and Harmful Practice in Zimbabwe

## High-level Political Compact to end gender-based violence, harmful practices launched

“High Level Political Compact launched is going to direct stakeholders and the nation towards ending gender-based violence. Implementing this document, my Ministry aim to promote an integrated approach towards eradication of Gender-Based Violence.” said Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Dr Sithembiso Nyoni.

The Government of Zimbabwe, the European Union Delegation to Zimbabwe, and the United Nations in Zimbabwe launched the High-Level Political Compact (HLPC) on Ending Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices in Zimbabwe under the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

The HLPC was launched and signing ceremony, presided over by His Excellency President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, bringing together partners including Government, EU Delegation, Development Partners, Heads of UN entities, representatives from traditional and religious leaders as well as Civil Society, to promote continued political commitment and engagement of leaders at the highest level to end violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

Of the 22 countries implementing the global joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, Zimbabwe become the first country to launch a High-Level Political Compact, showing an admirable effort to eliminate violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

“Today, we recommit ourselves to fighting Gender based violence and supporting gender equality by making a declaration through the High-Level Political Compact (HLPC) on ending gender-based violence and harmful practices.” Said H.E. The President of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa.



“As we do so, it is my conviction and hope that accelerated, adaptive and innovative implementation of global, regional and national commitments as outlined in the Action Plan of this HLPC will lead to our ultimate aspiration of a Gender Based Violence free society by 2030.” President Munangagwa added.



The HLPC was developed as a strategic initiative for an effective response by the Government of Zimbabwe, in partnership with a range of key stakeholders and partners, towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls at the national and subnational levels.

EU Ambassador, His Excellency Timo Olkkonen said: “The EU funded Spotlight Initiative, demonstrates commitment by the European Union to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly SDG 5 on gender equality, and advance to the next level.”

Gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriages, continue to be a huge societal challenge affecting women and girls of different socio-economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, in Zimbabwe which infringes upon their ability to have a voice, choice, and control over their own lives.

The 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) estimated that 39.4% of women in Zimbabwe aged 15-49 experience physical violence at least once in their lifetime, while 11.6% of women within the same demographic reported experiencing sexual violence. The same document also indicates that, in Zimbabwe, 1 in 3 women in the country between 20-49 were married before the age of 18.

“The HLPC can help to increase budget on gender-based violence prevention services, which is critical reduce the immense health, legal and productivity costs that the country continues to incur because of the scourge of violence against women and girls,” said UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Maria Ribeiro.

The HLPC, developed on the vision of a just society free from all forms of violence against women and girls, aims for increased high-level political will, commitment, and accountability to eliminate violence against women and girls, accelerate action to address violence against women and girls at the grassroots, subnational and national levels, as well as the effective monitoring and evaluation of the progress made towards ending these social ills.

The implementation of the HLPC under the Spotlight Initiative will advance gender equality and women empowerment, mainstreaming of women’s rights, foster multi-sectoral collaboration and grassroot engagement.



## ▶ **NORMATIVE MANDATE, A CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITY**

UN Women's Institutional strengthening mandate is a cross-cutting priority, which support Government departments and Civil Society to ensure international recommendations and commitments in normative frameworks (such as CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform, SADC Gender Protocol, Maputo Protocol) are domesticated, implemented, and monitored.

UN Women provided technical support to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development in the production of the CEDAW Mid-Term report and the rolling out of the recommendations for the CEDAW National Action Plan across Zimbabwe's 10 Provinces.

The Gender Bench Book has been developed and finalised, National CEDAW Reports are up to date, Gender Commission M&E Framework was developed and finalised and National Action Plan on The Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women have been successfully developed following wide consultations supported by UN Women and led by government departments, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Gender Commission, in collaboration with other national stakeholders the Action Plan have been committed to and now in place.

Key stakeholder in the process, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development said, "This bold step of accountability in developing The Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women National Action Plans is a clear testimony of the Government's commitment to women and young people's full and equal participation in development processes in Zimbabwe."

# Zim Spotlight Initiative Team

## wins award for gbv fight



ZIMBABWE won the Global Learning SympoFortitude Award for demonstrating efforts to curb violence against women and girls under difficult circumstances. The Global Learning SympoFortitude Awards were held in 2022 in Cancún, Mexico. Zimbabwe's Spotlight Initiative programme won the award, which recognised the way the programme showed resolve and determination to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV) on girls and women under limiting and difficult situation given the advent of COVID 19 Pandemic.

In one of the interventions, the programme used local community leaders like headman Shiku from Runde district to fight GBV against women and girls as part of the gender champions engaged through the joint Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls in remote communities. Online and mobile community groups were activated to raise awareness, respond and provide GBV services during the lockdowns.

Innovative approaches such as the online #WithHer campaign, virtual advocacy and community engagement promoting an end to violence against women and girls, brought together champions from government, diplomatic corps, civil society, business, women movements, media, artists, youth groups, and ordinary citizens, Headman Shiku said.

“It pains us to see young girls being married off at a tender age. At the age of consent of 18 years they must have their free will to get married. Champions like Headman Shiku from across the spectrum of society in Zimbabwe mobilized through the Spotlight Initiative have made it possible for the Zimbabwe's Spotlight Initiative Country Programme to win the Global Learning SympoFortitude Award,” a UN statement said.

Zimbabwe Spotlight Initiative was implemented at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when the country was also grappling with aftermaths of Cyclone Idai and socio-economic issues, among other challenges.

"The Zimbabwe Spotlight Initiative Country programme has recorded significant gains. Of note is the High-Level Political Compact (HLPC) on Gender Based Violence which was signed by the President of Zimbabwe in October 2021. It demonstrates a high-level political commitment to end violence against women and girls as well as harmful practices including child marriages. Laws and policies that protect women and girls from violence and abuse have also been put in place," the UN said.

The programme was implemented by the UN, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small and Medium Enterprises Development; Civil Society Reference Groups; and many other partners across the country. The programme directly and indirectly targets particularly rural women and girls, women and girls living with disabilities, and women living with HIV.





# Placing a spotlight

## on judicial service commission to end violence against women

The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) in partnership with United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) illuminated the Rotten Row Magistrates Court in orange – a colour which symbolizes hope and a brighter future, free of violence. It also served as a means of demonstrating solidarity in eliminating all forms of violence and it was therefore used as the colour of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

As part of the commemoration of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence under the global theme Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape for 2019, the Harare Magistrates Court joined a list of iconic buildings and monuments that have been lit in orange to call for a violence-free future.

The Rotten Row Magistrates Court has the largest case load of rape a month that pass through the judicial system. By illuminating the court orange during the 16 Days of Activism, the Judicial Service Commission sent a message of its commitment to deliver timely and victim-friendly justice to cases of rape and other gender-based crimes.

Speaking at the event, UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Maria Ribeiro said: “Without the courts following through with their legislated mandate of swift justice, by enforcing sentencing and ensuring access to the court systems especially for cases of rape and sexual violence, we shall continue to experience the unfortunate impact.”

This event also marked the beginning of collaborative efforts between UN Women and the Harare Magistrates Court in displaying educative information on rape and gender-based crimes through the Court’s broadcasts.

Spaces in which women feel safe are shrinking while gender-blind spots in policy implementation and legislation are threatening women’s security making them vulnerable to rape, assault and killing. The increase in cases of rape, assault and abuse of women has been reported in so many spaces and institutions that include churches, schools, and workplaces. This therefore calls for accelerated cooperation among different stakeholders.

Speaking at the event EU Deputy Ambassador, Mr Thomas von Handel said: “Ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence and harmful practices is a joint responsibility. The EU joins the call to action to act swiftly and decisively act against rape and all other forms of violence against women and girls! We must put an end to all kinds of abuse to reach equality and peace and protect the human rights of millions of women and girls.”



## Men as allies

### paying dividends in the fight against GBV in communities

Like many other communities in rural Zimbabwe, Ward 15 of Mbire district has not been spared from the scourge of gender-based violence. GBV has been a huge challenge in the community fuelled by various reasons in the villages of Mbire, a mind-set shift was required from all members of the household's women, men and children in order for change to happen.

Recognising the potential role men could play in fighting gender-based violence in the area, a Men's Forum was created through the support of the Spotlight Initiative a partnership programme between the European Union and the United Nations programme being implemented in the District by Lower Guruve Development Association with the support of UN Women.

The Men's Forums have a committee of 7 people per ward in all 16 wards of Mbire district. "We were trained on gender advocacy by the spotlight programme, as men who have been mostly the perpetrators of this kind of violence and also members of the community, we were motivated to bring transformative change to the community and ensure that changed happened," said Norman Mtukudzi a member of the forum.

"In Mbire Men are known for using power and forceful means and authority in household decision making. Before creation of the Forum there were constant reports and incidents of GBV in the Village

but that has become a thing of the past. Things are changing as men are becoming more consultative.”

The Men’s Forum was assisted to conduct a study which validated the reports that men were the leading perpetrators of GBV. “As men we decided to use existing, already organised meeting platforms to teach, sensitise and train the community on GBV. We are noticing reduced GBV cases particularly from Men. As a Forum, we made ourselves more accessible to the community and families in case issues arising making it easier for households to discuss emerging issues, we have seen dialogues to work with families,” said Mtukudzi.

The transformation and change in behaviour dialogues and the Men’s Forum has achieved is now apparent, Men are now accommodating views and contributions from women and children in household decision making, Men further now embrace different roles in the house such as domestic and unpaid care work for the family.

“Women would commit suicide over abuse of money by men in the household but now those cases have significantly reduced. Families are now working together,” said Mtukudzi.

“Through working together with families to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence the quality of life for most women and families has improved, peace is now a common feature.

To strengthen how we work as the Men’s Forum, some of our members have become part of the Crime Consultative Committee with the police and reports recorded through the police do indicate a significant decline in reported crimes around GBV.”





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## Youth researcher standing up for the voiceless

Twenty – one year-old youth researcher Tsitsi Masvusvu is determined to leave no stone unturned when it comes to fighting Gender Based Violence in Hopley one of Harare’s densely populated peri urban settlements.

“I was studying social work with University Zimbabwe and saw an advert for Youth Researchers from Restless Development on social media,” said Tsitsi.

Coming from university Tsitsi joined the research programme being spearheaded by Restless Development an Implementing partner of the Spotlight Initiative in Harare Province. Spotlight, is a partnership programme between the European Union and The United Nations, Funded by EU to the tune of \$30 Million to fight Gender Based Violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

“I have always had a passion for standing up for the voiceless. Initially, studying law was my first option but quickly realised social work was the best option for me in making change happen,” she said.

“After being selected we were given an opportunity to choose the topic we would focus on in our quest to make a positive impact in the community. Conducting the research was an eye-opening experience and exciting. Being a resident of the community, everyday Tsitsi would wake up early to fetch water for house chores and anything she would be required to do at home before dashing out to do the research.”

Her new obsession had become the research and seeing that the issues affecting women and girls in her community are addressed. “During the research we encountered many obstacles including



harassment owing to how the community mindset needed to be transformed. I encountered a girl being bitten for breaking up with her boyfriend, this and many other experiences that needed to stop” said Tsitsi.

“After the research was complete, we held a community dialogue session to feedback the results to stakeholders. Invited were members of Police Victim Friendly Unit, community leaders and health workers.”

“Before research and community engagement was facilitated through the Spotlight Initiative, people had been long afraid of the police but now there is a better understanding and a relationship has been built. Service delivery improved among the stakeholders responsible for serving the community has improved. As part of the programme accountability trainings have been conducted to sensitise the community on how to engage with stakeholder to ensure improved service delivery.

“As part of the research, the data collection and analysis followed up by the advocacy, allowed me to gain a sense of self-worth and assertiveness as a young woman. I was able to present the findings of the research to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on women’s affairs and justice. This was a good experience for me, I got a proper confidence booster! Here I was, a young woman speaking truth to power about the challenges of my lived reality” said Tsitsi.

“I am now bolder and more informed, I’m no more ignorant on public policy process. Going forward I want to be actively involved in youth development and empowerment, build my career, and start my own organization, hopefully inspire more young women getting engaged.”

## ▶ HARNESSING TALENT THROUGH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH



The Innovators Against GBV leadership development programme has been able to harness the talent, energy and creativity of graduate volunteers and inspired innovative volunteerism and solutions that resulted in safer communities for women and girls while building a critical mass of skilled young experts on gender across five provinces. Thirty (20 females and 10 males) Innovators Against Gender-based Violence (IAGs) participated in implementation of various UN Women supported community development programmes. Being graduates from the leadership development initiative, the young activists are now better equipped to pursue their ambitions and life goals.

Speaking on her experiences as an Innovator against GBV Talent Chibvongodze said: “The requirement to design and develop innovative solutions to gender-based violence challenges in communities pushed me to think outside of the norm and with support from civil society organisations I worked with, I was able to contribute and strengthen the community’s response to violence against women and girls”.



# SASA!

## Together, empowering women, raising leaders in the fight against GBV and HIV

Ms Feluna Ncube, 44, is a proud councillor of Ward 20 in Maphisa District, Matabeleland South province. She is also a gender champion, who works to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV in her community. She credits her success to SASA! Together, a programme that has taught her about power balance and gender equality.

“I gained courage from SASA! Together. The programme has broken the cultural norm of men over women. Knowing that men and women are equal, it gave me courage. I ran for the councillor position, competing with men, and won,” she said.

Ms Ncube is one of the 40 trained SASA! gender champions trained by Hope for Child in Christ (HOCIC) in Maphisa District. The trainings and the SASA! programme is implemented by HOCIC with the support of UN Women under the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative programme. The SASA! Together is a community-based approach to prevent GBV and HIV, developed by Raising Voices, Uganda. It aims to change the power dynamics and gender norms that cause GBV and HIV.



SASA! Together programme, through the Spotlight Initiative, has challenged cultural norm of men over women. It has taught me that men and women are equal, and that gave me courage. I ran for the councillor position, against men, and I won.

*Feluna Ncube- Councillor for Ward 20 in Maphisa district*

The 40 trained gender champions from 16 villages in wards 9 and 15 engage their communities through social gatherings such as funerals, beer hall chill outs and school activities to raise awareness about GBV and HIV driven by power inequalities. They also provide support and counselling to community members who need support with GBV issues. They also work with religious and traditional leaders, who have a lot of influence and respect in the community. HOCIC trained them as agents of change, so that they can sensitise their followers and congregants about GBV and HIV. The gender champions sometimes get invited by these leaders to talk about GBV in their churches and councils.

Describing the positive shift of behaviour in the community, Ms Ncube stressed the importance of male involvement and how it has positively shifted the mindsets of men in the community. “They use the HeForShe campaign to mobilise and influence men to change their negative behaviours and attitudes that harm women and girls. They organise HeForShe Indabas once a month, where men gather in different places such as beerhalls, business centres and community halls to discuss how they can promote gender equality and end GBV.

“Getting men to be a part of the change and solution helped quite a lot. There has been a significant change coming from the conversations that we had with men. This has yielded in behaviour change as well,” she said.

SASA! Together has also improved the reporting and response to GBV cases in the district. Survivors now know where and how to report their cases. They also get timely access to GBV services such as sexual reproductive health and rights, legal counsel, and advice. These services are provided through referral pathways and collaboration between the gender champions and other service providers.

Drug abuse cases among boys and young men in the district have declined. Through road-show awareness campaigns and HeForShe indabas, the gender champions addressed the issue of drug abuse and its effects to families and the community.

Economic hardships were also one of the main drivers of GBV, especially in homes. The programme addressed this by supporting women’s economic empowerment as a solution to end GBV in homes. Mr Thembani Ndlovu, a 57-year-old gender champion, highlighted the importance of women’s economic empowerment.

He said, “When women are economically empowered, they can prevent GBV in their homes. They can share the financial responsibilities with their husbands and reduce the pressure on them. This creates a balance of power, peace and harmony in their homes.”

Maphisa district is known for its illegal gold mining activities. Many young men between 16 and 35 work as gold panners in the area. When they have money, they often tempt young girls into early marriages and pregnancies, abuse drugs and commit violence. Due to the illegal mining, many women and girls migrate to the district for sex work hence causing infidelity issues that drive gender-based violence in households.

SASA! inspires communities around the world to use their power to create safe and violence-free communities for women. In Zimbabwe, UN Women and its partners have been implementing SASA! under the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative programme. The programme aims to address GBV and HIV transmissions caused by power imbalance and gender inequality between men and women. SASA! has four phases: Start, Awareness, Support and Action. HOCIC has been implementing all the four

phases in Maphisa, with the support of UN Women under the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative.

Under the Spotlight Initiative programme, UN Women reached beneficiaries directly and indirectly, especially rural women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, and women living with HIV. The Spotlight Initiative programme was implemented from community to national level in five provinces: Harare, Manicaland, Mashonaland West and Central and Matabeleland South.

SAYWHAT, implemented SASA! Together in Hopley district, in Harare Province using the HeForShe Indaba dialogue model in their SASA! Together programming. Katswe Sistahood implemented SASA! Together methodology in Mbire and Guruve district in Mashonaland Central province where 50 Community Activists were trained and rolled out the methodology using HeForShe dialogue model in beerhalls and at sports activities to engage men.

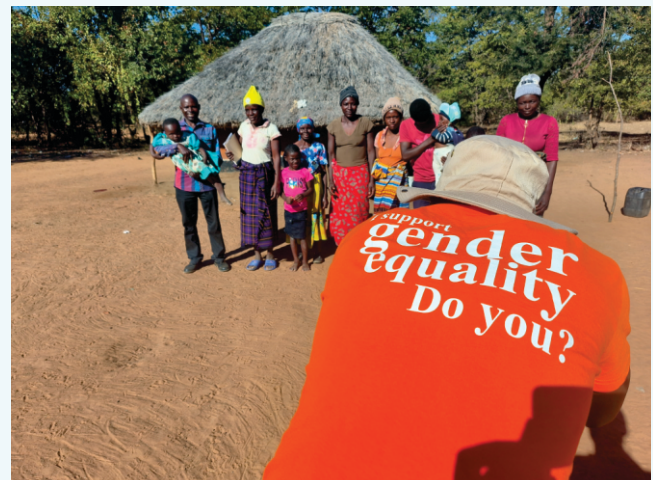
## ▶ EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SAFE GENDER RESPONSIVE MARKETS

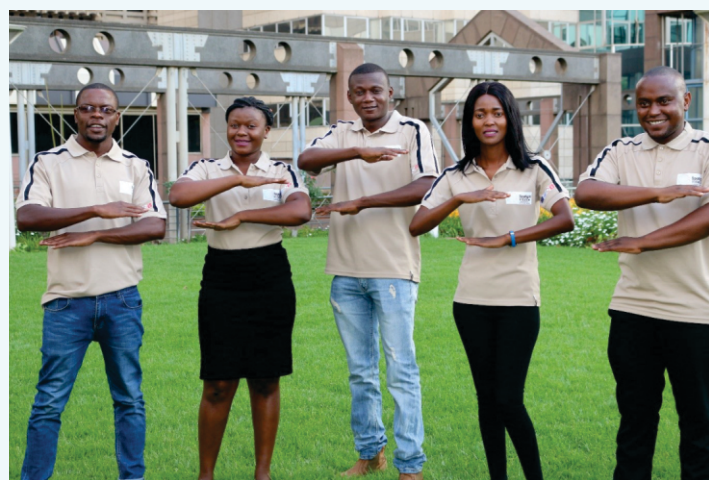
UN Women in collaboration with government stakeholders and implementing partners launched a gender responsive Safe Market in Epworth accommodating 96 women vendor, well-lit stalls, children's resting room and play area, separate female, and male ablution facilities, and clean water facilities with funding from the European Union under the Spotlight Initiative programme.

Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Deputy Minister Honourable Jennifer Mhlanga said, "Economic empowerment of women is integral to any sustainable approach to eradicating violence against women as studies show that women who control their own resources are less vulnerable to being victimized because of their gender."


Established safe market prioritised Infrastructure that is sensitive to community and women's needs, complies with occupational health requirements and safety of women, integrates green energy and digital financial services solutions, and has structures to prevent and address gender-based violence and harassment of women.

# IMAGE COLLAGE





**for a  
world  
with  
zer  
violence  
against  
women and  
girls**





**Spotlight  
Initiative**  
*To eliminate violence  
against women and girls*



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